



The Board of Park and Recreation Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met at the Administrative Office Building, located at 5841 Brookshire Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28216 at 6 p.m. on May 8, 2018.

PRC MINUTES

May 8, 2018

ATTENDANCE

PRC Present:

Elaine Powell, Chair
Heidi Pruess – Vice-Chair
Sterling Martin
Brian Cox
Peter Engels
John Leonard
Blanche Penn
Doug Burnett
Rick Winiker
Tristan McMannis

PRC Absent

Mary Foxx Johnson
Vacancy – Northern Towns
Vacancy – South 3

Photo Shoot at 6 p.m.

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 6:12 p.m. by Chair Elaine Powell, which was followed by the pledge of allegiance.

Welcome and Introductions:

Chair Powell welcomed all to the May 8, 2018 Park and Recreation Commission meeting. All commissioners introduced themselves and shared the region they represent. Park and Recreation staff introduced themselves.

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Public Appearance

Ms. Alberenthious Stover: Ms. Stover, on behalf of the NC Association of Senior Clubs, Inc., District 8, came before the Park and Recreation Commission requesting an update on previous public appearances at PRC meetings in opposition of the \$5.00 fee for Sr. Trip bus transportation. She also asked that the Park and Recreation Department provide adequate bus transportation to quarterly meetings and state meetings and provide a charter bus to the annual conference so that all members of District 8 would have the opportunity to attend.

Ms. Diane Parks: Ms. Parks, also spoke asking if the Park and Recreation Department might have scholarships to support bus transportation to various meetings for District 8 of the NC Assoc. of Senior Clubs.

Commissioner Penn expressed her frustration at not having answers provided to the senior concerns brought before the PRC over the past several months.

Executive Team Nominating Committee:

The Nominating Committee, Commissioners Burnett and Martin, passed out a voting ballot of nominations for the PRC Executive Team. The ballot consisted of:

Chair: Heidi Pruess

Vice Chair: John Leonard and Rick Winiker

Executive Secretary: Blanche Penn and Peter Engels

Commissioner Penn asked that her name be removed from the ballot.

At the end of the meeting the votes were tabulated, and the new PRC Executive Team for June 2018 through May 2019 was declared to be:

Chair: Commissioner Heidi Pruess

Vice Chair: Commissioner Rick Winiker

Executive Secretary: Commissioner Peter Engels

Motion was made by Commissioner Martin to accept the vote and officially name the PRC Executive Team as Commissioner Pruess, Chair; Commissioner Winiker, Vice Chair; and Commissioner Engels, Executive Secretary; which was seconded by Commissioner Cox and approved unanimously.

Awards and Recognition:

Lori Saylor and Paul Rogers, Jr.: The retirement of Lori Saylor and Paul Rogers was recognized

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by Director Lee Jones and Peter Cook, Division Director for Park Operations. Neither were present to accept their awards.

Chair Elaine Powell: Recognition of Commissioner Powell's service on the Park and Recreation Commission was moved to the end of the agenda.

PRC Chair Report

PRC Priorities:

Land Acquisition/Preservation: Greenway Update – Director Lee Jones

Director Lee Jones provided a greenway update and shared various slides used in the presentation made at the Greenways for Mecklenburg event, recently held in Cornelius, NC. These slides showed:

- Existing Greenways of 48.85 miles with 12.9 miles of entrance trails
- Greenways in Design and Construction of 21.3 miles (FY18)
- Greenways in Capital Plan FY19-23 of 23.11 miles

Commissioner Pruess asked if any of the proposed FY19-23 greenway projects were dependent on land acquisition? Director Jones said yes. One example would be greenway reaches from Pineville to the State line. Some of these reaches are in deliberation with the land owners and the Town of Pineville. Director Jones said he plans to reach out to Christy Detwiler, Pineville Parks and Recreation Director, and the Town Manager, Ryan Spitzer, to determine where we are with this as the Department worked in partnership with the Town of Pineville to develop these reaches to the State line.

Commissioner Pruess asked if more updates on the status of land acquisitions associated with other park property needs would be shared with the PRC at future meetings? Director Jones said that Liz Morrell, Management Analyst, and Jacqueline McNeil, Real Estate Manager, would be making a presentation at the next PRC meeting to cover the status of land acquisitions, green printing, and the prioritization process.

Adequate Funding – Stewardship AC Resolution

The Stewardship Advisory Council (SAC) drafted a resolution to request funding for three (3) additional staff dedicated to the eradication of invasive species and skilled in the use of fire as a primary method of control. The resolution came because of multiple meetings with presentations on the subject by the council and by outside presenters who were concerned with this problem and were looking for solutions and opportunities to address. The SAC requested support of the resolution by the PRC and that it be included as an ask at the Budget Public Hearing. This resolution can be viewed here: [Stewardship Invasive Species Resolution](#)

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Discussion resulted in the following:

- County Procurement adopted a list of invasive species to not purchase for planting on County property and at one time had an invasive species task force to reach out to the big box stores to address sale of invasive species. It was recommended that PRC get an update on these two initiatives at a future meeting.
- The process of using a “resolution” from an Advisory Council to move a funding request forward to the BOCC at the Budget Public Hearing was discussed as an option for getting asks before the BOCC. It was noted that the typical process for preparing for the PRC presentation at the Budget Public Hearing would be to meet with the Director, Deputy Director and the Sr. Fiscal Administrator to review the needs that were not included in the budget and to prioritize for presentation to the BOCC. The importance of addressing the needs to the BOCC as identified by citizens, such as the SAC resolution, was stressed.
- Leslie Johnson, Assistant County Manager, shared information on the recommended budget process. Priority staffing needs by the Department, first, addressed staffing for new facilities and assets, security, and items identified in the Strategic Business Plan. Invasive Species Control was not in the current Strategic Business Plan.
- It was agreed that a unified statement by the PRC to present to the BOCC at the Budget Public Hearing on June 4 was needed. It was suggested the PRC Resolution, drafted at the 2018 PRC retreat, be the basis of the PRC presentation and that other feedback could be included as shared by the PRC. Discussion also followed regarding the need for a timelier process to meet with the Director and Staff to be prepared for a presentation by the PRC at future Budget Public Hearings.
- The Director was asked to clarify the duties/responsibilities of a Park and Recreation Commissioner. Director Jones responded that the role of the PRC is to be advocates and advisors to the Department and to the BOCC. This includes advocating for the needs as expressed by citizens and advisory to the BOCC to keep them informed.

Strategic Business Planning Exercise Follow-up – Liz Morrell

Liz Morrell, Management Analyst, met with the PRC Strategic Planning and Long-Range Finance Sub-Committee in April to discuss the FY20-22 Strategic Planning Process and to get input from the committee. She is also scheduled to attend each of the Regional Advisory Councils to share and receive feedback on the Strategic Business Plan. Once all the feedback is gathered a report will be completed and shared with the PRC.

Liz also shared the results of the exercise by the PRC at the April PRC Meeting on what the Department is doing well and what the Department could be doing better as it pertained to the NRPA’s three pillars: conservation, social equity, and health and wellness. This presentation and the results can be viewed here: [Strategic Business Planning Follow-Up](#)

Active Community Engagement – Advisory Council Sub-Committee Update and Next Steps

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Commissioner Engels said that the Advisory Council Sub-Committee has paused the discussion on a restructuring of the Advisory Councils. The plan is to arrange a workshop meeting to discuss outside of the normal PRC meeting. The will provide opportunity to gather more feedback from the advisory councils. July 10, 2018 was suggested to meet.

Director's Report

Director Jones reported on the following:

Hal Marshall Site Redevelopment: Director Jones provided an update regarding the proposed redevelopment strategy for the Hal Marshall site to include an approximate 5-acre park. This proposal was presented to the BOCC at the Public Policy Workshop and discussed at the April 10, 2018 PRC meeting. Questions were raised by the BOCC regarding funding and development methodology. Particularly, concerns were raised regarding the cost of the development and assurance of investment by the City of Charlotte.

Town of Matthews Purser-Hulsey Park: Director Jones shared a proposed park master plan which the Town of Matthews will be taking before their Board of County Commissioners to develop this 93-acre site into a park. The property, which fronts on Matthews Mint Hill Road and Phillips Rd, is owned by the County but will be developed and maintained by the Town of Matthews. The proposed park will include a Splash Park, Clubhouse Barn, Amphitheater, Playground/Nature Play, Fishing Pond, Community Garden, Dog Park, various trails and more. The County would work together with the Town of Matthews like the Mecklenburg County Regional Sports Complex.

The PRC asked if there was a way to bring these types of projects to the attention of the appropriate Advisory Council and the PRC earlier before they go before a Town Board. Director Jones plans to meet and work more closely with the Towns to help provide more timely information.

Mayerling Neighborhood Park Workshop, Information Session: This workshop shared the proposed park plan and encouraged the community to share their ideas on what they would like to see in the neighborhood park.

Abersham: Director Jones shared a naming/renaming application that is coming forward to name the Abersham Nature Preserve, Park and Greenway to Monarch Butterfly Park. The PRC will be updated as this application develops.

Open Streets 704: Director Jones thanked staff for all their work and everyone for supporting the recent Open Streets 704. The event was a great success with over 30,000 people participating.

Third Ward Park Naming: A naming ceremony will be held on Thursday, May 10 at 3 p.m. to

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name the park after Dennis Rash.

Advisory Council Appointments

Motion was made by Commissioner Pruess to appoint **Adam Getchell** to a first full term on the Stewardship Advisory Council, expiring 6/2021, which was seconded by Commissioner Burnett and approved unanimously with Commissioner Penn abstaining from the vote.

Consent

Motion was made by Commissioner Martin to approve all consent items, including the PRC minutes of [April 10, 2018](#), which was seconded by Commissioner Pruess and approved unanimously.

PRC Reports and Requests

Commissioner Engels: Partners for Parks is leading an urban park tour by bicycle on Saturday, May 12. The Tour will leave from Cordelia Park at 1:30 p.m.

Commissioner Penn: Revisited some of the recreation centers with lower scores on her recreation center report to see if any improvements have been made. This report will be shared with the PRC when complete. Commissioner Penn also visited Albemarle Road with Lee Jones, James Williams and Sterling Martin and gained a better understanding of neighborhood parks and the various play elements offered. Also, continuing to attend community meetings regarding the David B. Waymer Center.

Commissioner McMannis: Sr. Games wrapped up the previous weekend.

Commissioner Winiker: Campbell Creek Greenway opening ceremony scheduled for May 15 at 11 a.m.

Commissioner Cox: Commissioner Cox noted that motorized scooters are the most recent transportation offered in uptown. Many are being used without helmets

Commissioner Leonard: Commissioner Leonard has been learning more about the Neighborhood Matching Grants Program. He will bring that information back and share with the PRC.

The Neighborhood Matching Grants Program (NMG) awards funds to eligible neighborhood-based organizations to make neighborhoods better places to live, work, play and shop. The program was created in 1992 to promote the City of Charlotte's neighborhood focus by achieving four primary goals: build neighborhood capacity and participation, allow neighborhoods to self-determine improvement priorities, leverage citizen involvement and resources to revitalize and reinvest in low and moderate-income neighborhoods and stimulate development of partnerships between City and community groups. The Neighborhood Matching Grants Program seeks to support projects and

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programs that demonstrate community-wide benefit with a goal of improving quality of life.

Commissioner Martin: The Sports Wall of Fame ceremony will be held May 17 at 5 p.m. at the Revolution Park Sports Academy

Awards and Recognition – Resignation of Chair Elaine Powell

Director Jones honored **Chair Elaine Powell** with a crystal award recognizing her dedicated service to the Park and Recreation Commission over the past 8 years and for serving as the Chair. Many accolades were shared regarding her outstanding leadership and many best wishes for her future endeavors. A tree was also planted in her honor at Latta Nature Preserve. [Elaine's Tree](#)

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

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